

1819

ON A DREAM

John Keats

Keats, John (1795-1821) - Widely regarded as the most talented of the English romantic poets, Keats, whose work was poorly received during his lifetime, could not have foreseen his later recognition. Ironically, he wrote for his own epitaph: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." On a Dream (1819) - The dream was inspired by a rereading of the Fifth Canto of Dante's Inferno. Opening lines: As Hermes once took to his feathers light / When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept, ...

ON A DREAM

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As Hermes once took to his feathers light
When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept,
So on a Delphic reed my idle spright
So play'd, so charm'd, so conquer'd, so bereft
The dragon-world of all its hundred eyes,
And, seeing it asleep, so fled away:
Not to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,
Nor unto Tempe where Jove griev'd a day;
But to that second circle of sad hell,
Where 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw
Of rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell
Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw,
Pale were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form
I floated with, about that melancholy storm.

THE END